

Prairie Creek Redwoods

State Park



Redwood National
and State Parks



Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at (707) 465-7335. This publication is available in alternate formats by contacting:

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SaveTheRedwoods.org/csp

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park

127011 Newton B. Drury Parkway

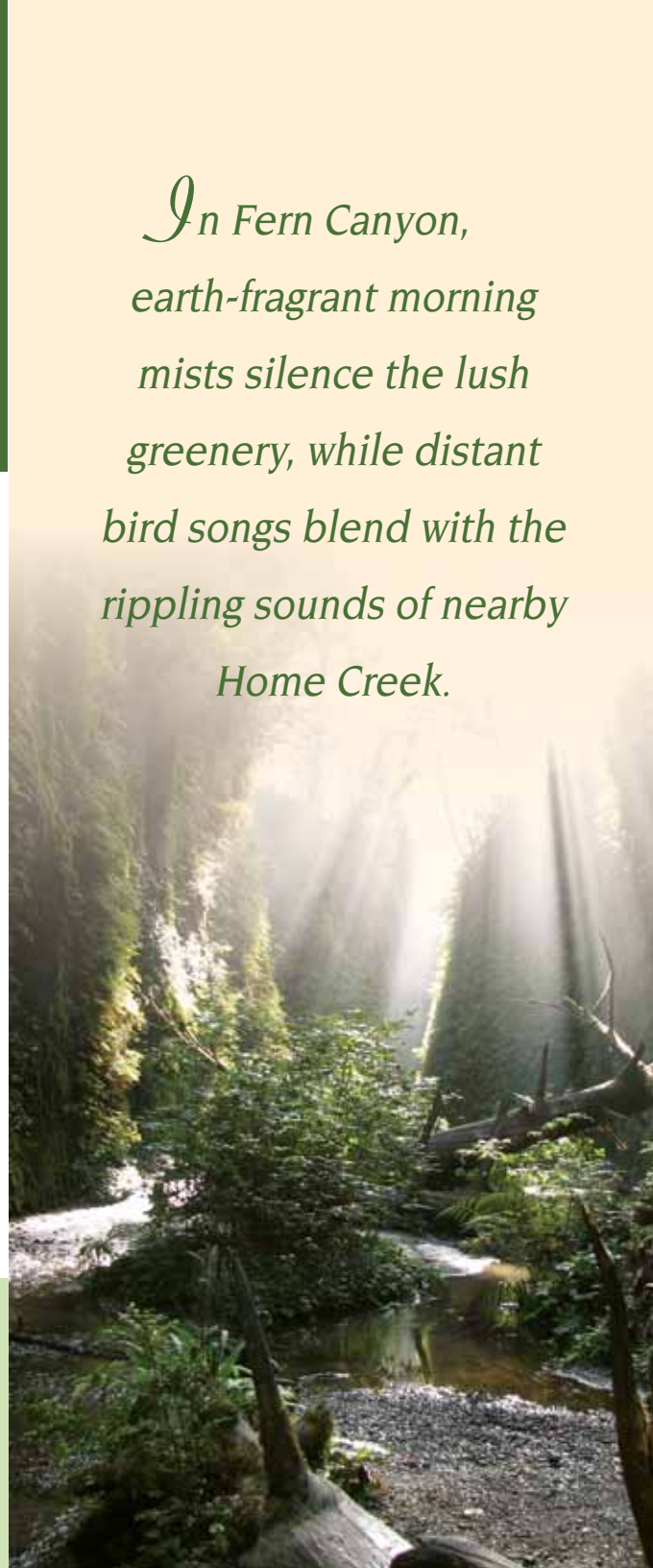
Orick, CA 95555

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Cover photo courtesy of Save The Redwoods Photo Archives

*In Fern Canyon,
earth-fragrant morning
mists silence the lush
greenery, while distant
bird songs blend with the
rippling sounds of nearby
Home Creek.*



*A*long California's rocky north coast, Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park

offers sandy
beaches and open
meadows grazed by
herds of Roosevelt
elk. Ferns appear

to flow like a green waterfall down steep
canyon walls, and old-growth redwoods
stand in primeval majesty.

Summer brings morning fog, which usually
burns off by midday. Winter rains bring
needed water to the redwoods and ferns.

PARK HISTORY

Native California Indians

Yurok people have lived in and around
today's Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park
for generations. The temperate climate
and abundant wildlife of the north coast
promoted a culturally rich way of life that
continues today. Yurok people built villages
of redwood planks along major waterways.
Traveling by dugout canoe, they fished for
salmon. They also hunted elk, deer and
other small game and gathered plants.

In 1850, when gold was found near
today's Fern Canyon, the Yurok people
were overwhelmed by an influx of settlers.
Conflict over the land took many forms.
The native people were hunted down; any
who survived the attacks were forced onto
reservations. Newly introduced diseases
further decimated their numbers.



Today, the Yurok have made a remarkable
recovery. As the most populous tribe
in California, nearly 5,500 Yurok live
in Humboldt and Del Norte counties.
Tribal members are building a future by
revitalizing their ancestral language and
traditions based on customs of the past.

Settling the North Coast

The first marine explorers along the
Humboldt-Del Norte coast were Spaniard
Bartolome Ferrello in 1543, Englishman
Sir Francis Drake in 1579, and Spaniard
Sebastian Vizcaíno in 1602. The first shore
landing, near Trinidad Head, was made by
Bruno Hezeta and Juan Bodega in 1775.

In May 1850, miners crossing today's Gold
Bluffs Beach saw bits of gold in the sand.
Removing the gold proved too laborious,
so the prospectors moved on.

*Yurok plank houses near Trinidad
Illustration by J. Goldsborough Bruff
ca. 1851*



However, settlers needed raw materials
to build their homes and towns. By the
1890s, several short-line railroads and
steam donkeys had helped create a boom
in commercial logging. Lumber quickly
became the west's top industry—Eureka
alone had nine sawmills.

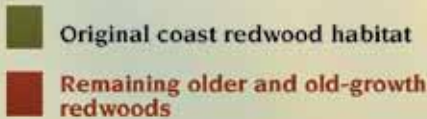
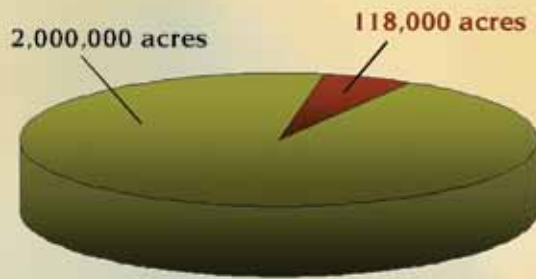
By the end of the 19th century, farms,
ranches and dairies had been developed
along the north coast. Today, several of
these historical dairies remain a vital part
of the north coast's economy.

Conservation and State Parks

Between 1880 and the early 1900s,
thousands of acres of old-growth redwoods
had disappeared; in many areas, the trees
had been cut to the bare ground.

Alarmed, conservationists established the
Save the Redwoods League in 1918 to

The Coast Redwood



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▲ The coast redwood is the tallest living thing on earth.
- ▲ Fossils show that relatives of today's coast redwoods thrived in the Jurassic Era 160 million years ago.
- ▲ About five percent of the world's old-growth redwoods exist today.
- ▲ More than 95 percent of the world's old-growth redwoods are in California.
- ▲ Of those older and old-growth redwoods still in existence, about 80 percent are protected in parks and reserves.

protect the groves, obtaining donations from lumber companies and concerned citizens. The League and the State of California were able to buy thousands of acres adjoining Prairie Creek. By 1923, some of the grandest old-growth tree stands on the planet had been acquired by the State.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a national work program, began during the Great Depression of the 1930s. CCC members built themselves a camp at Elk Prairie, where they lived while building the present visitor center, trail system, campground and picnic facilities.

Redwood National and State Parks

In October 1968, the National Park Service (NPS) created Redwood National Park in Del Norte and Humboldt counties. In 1994, NPS and California State Parks agreed to co-manage four parks: Del Norte Coast, Prairie Creek and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Parks, and Redwood National Park. Both entities agreed that managing the parks together would ensure commitment to greater protection and preservation of more than 105,000 acres of redwood forest.

On September 5, 1980, the United Nations designated Redwood National and State Parks as a World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve.

NATURAL HISTORY

Coast redwoods have existed along the north coast for about 20 million years. Ever-present coastal fog meets about one-

third of their annual water needs. Experts fear that Earth's changing climate endangers the redwoods' survival as temperatures increase and coastal fog diminishes. The redwoods and the "soil mats" of leaf litter that collect in the redwood canopy support a variety of other plants and animals.

Coast Douglas-fir also grows among the Sitka spruce, tanoaks, oaks, rhododendrons and azaleas.

Fern Canyon

This spectacular, shady canyon's 50-foot walls, draped with seven kinds of ferns, resemble a hanging garden. Prairie Creek's Fern Canyon is draped in mounds of five-finger, deer, lady, sword and chain ferns. The canyon's restful quiet is broken only by far-off bird songs and the distant sound of breaking waves.

Wildlife

Many species—including brown bats, red squirrels, black bears and even coyotes—feed on berries.

In this deep, rich soil, salamanders and slugs thrive. Mountain lions, coyotes and bobcats hunt at night for black-tailed deer, elk and small game.

Endangered marbled murrelets (closely related to puffins) nest in old-growth redwood trees. Since corvids (crows, ravens and jays) prey upon murrelet eggs and chicks, do not feed wildlife or drop food or scraps.



Northern red-legged frog

Double-crested and pelagic cormorants, common murre and surf scoters can be seen off the coast, while federally threatened Western snowy plovers, gulls, great blue herons, and peregrine falcons fly along Gold Bluffs Beach.

Western garter snakes, northern red-legged frogs and rough-skinned newts are common. Look for Pacific gray whales and dolphins offshore. California sea lions, harbor seals and Steller sea lions lie on rocks just off the coast.

Roosevelt Elk

Boyce Prairie, commonly used by one of the park's elk herds, is closed to visitors. For your safety and that of the elk, do not veer off any trails while hiking or cycling.

Once teetering on the brink of extinction, the Roosevelt elk now thrive in their habitat. During the elk's mating season—six weeks from August to October—the air resounds with the calls of bulls challenging each other for mating rights. Bull elk and cows with calves can be extremely dangerous.

Approaching elk is not only hazardous, it is also against state law. When taking pictures, please stay on trails, use a telephoto lens or purchase postcards at park headquarters.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Trails—The park has about 75 miles of trails rated from Very Easy to Strenuous. See the "Trails" chart on the map for details.

Photo courtesy of Brian Reub



Roosevelt elk roam free in the park meadows.

Camping—Elk Prairie Campground has 75 family sites and hike/bike sites. For reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit www.parks.ca.gov. Gold Bluffs Beach Campground has 26 tent or RV sites, and three non-reservable environmental sites. RVs more than eight feet wide or 24 feet long may not use Davison Road or Coastal Drive. No hookups or sanitation stations are available. Call (707) 488-2171 for camping updates.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Camping—Elk Prairie has three generally accessible sites, restrooms, showers and travel paths. Gold Bluffs Beach sites are on hard-packed dirt and gravel.

Trails—Big Tree Trail: 0.3 mile. Trailhead north of Big Tree lot. Roadside parking.

Prairie Creek Trail: 1.5 miles. Trailhead off Newton B. Drury Parkway.

Revelation Trail: 0.25 mile, interpretive; accommodates visually impaired users. For accessibility updates and details, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.



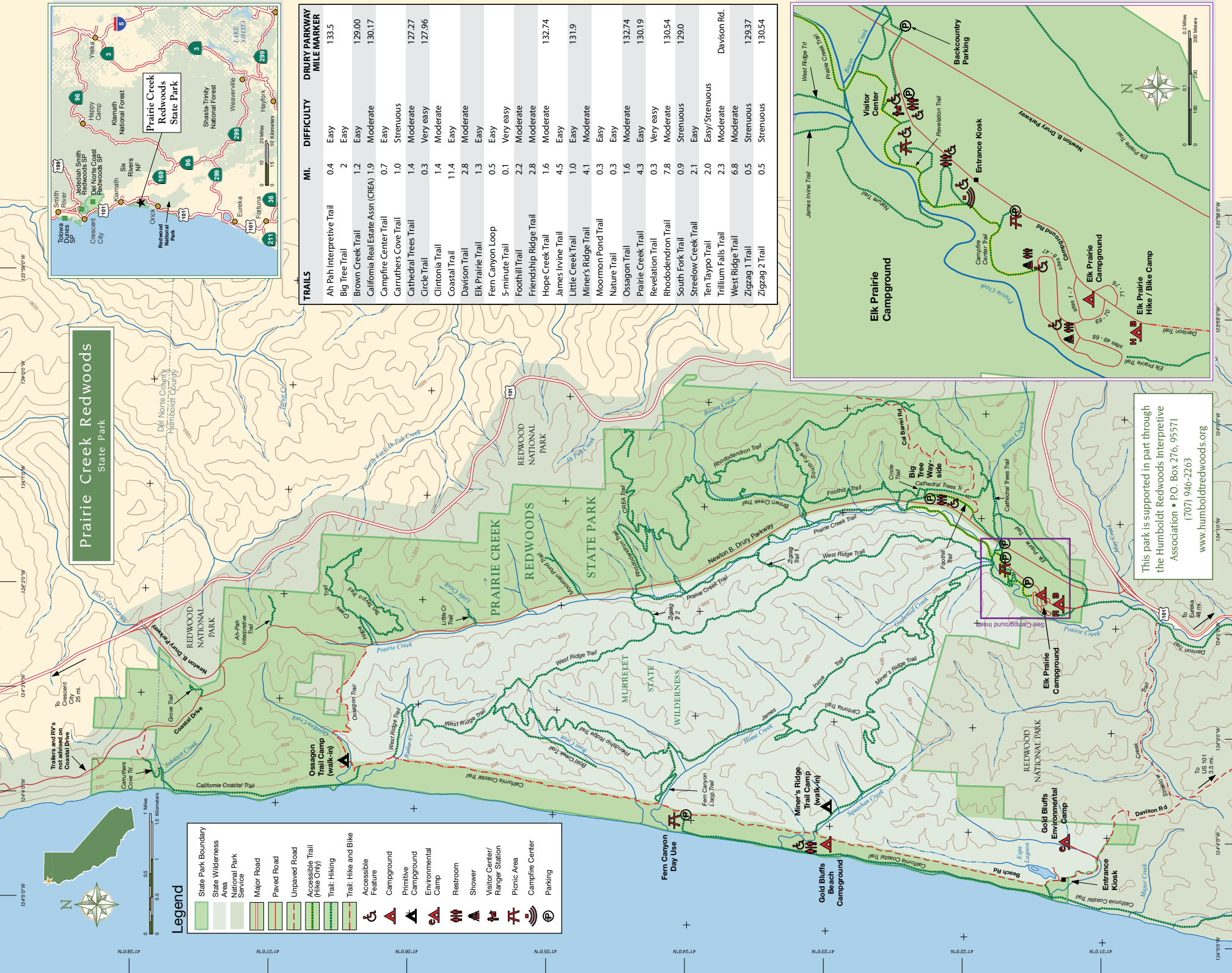
Be kind to the forest and stay on the trails.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Patrick's Point State Park
4150 Patrick's Point Dr., Trinidad 95570
(707) 677-3570
- Del Norte Coast Redwoods SP, 7 miles south of Crescent City off Highway 101
(707) 465-7335
- Jedediah Smith Redwoods SP
1111 Second St. (Visitor Center)
Crescent City 95531 (707) 465-7335

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Dogs must be on a leash no more than six feet long and must be confined to a tent or vehicle at night. Except for service animals, pets are not allowed on trails.
- Natural and cultural artifacts are protected by law and may not be disturbed.
- Never approach elk or other wild animals.
- Do not feed wildlife. Keep a clean camp; store food and scented items in lockers.
- All firearms are prohibited.
- Help keep your park clean and litter free. If you bring it in, take it back out.



This park is supported in part through the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association • P.O. Box 276, 95571 (707) 946-2243 www.humboltdredwoods.org